# Parliament's Dusty Robes, as Democracy Dons Them

By Frank Dilnot

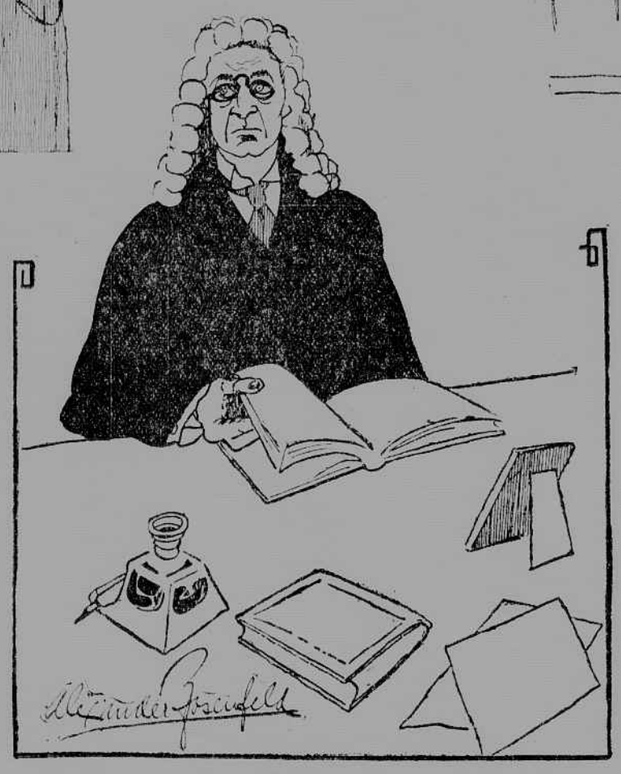
*New York Correspondent of the London Chronicle*

THE new British Parliament, with its swamping majority for Mr. Lloyd George, which is about to enter on the greatest and most democratic work of any Parliament in British history, will set about it with all the archaic customs and methods which are such a piquant part of what in some respects is one of the most progressive legislatures in the world. It is progressive because it is so instantly responsive to the nation's will. Ministers can carry on the government of the country only while they have the majority of the House of Commons, and if the action of any one of them on some big project turns the balance of members against the government the government has to resign and go out of office.

A procedure hammered out through centuries is all in the direction of making the House of Commons supreme in the government of the country. Here is an example. Sometimes the House of Lords has to send down a message on a bill to the Commons. A little delegation of officials comes through the long corridor from the Guild Chamber down to the House, which is in session and busy with some small or large matter. The uniformed attendant at the entrance to the Commons, when he sees the Lords' delegates approaching, immediately closes the two large doors in their faces. He locks them with an ostentation which is all part of the ceremony. Then he opens a little trap in the panel of one of the doors and formally asks of them their business. After ascertaining it, and consulting with the Speaker in the House of Commons, he goes back and opens the big doors, admits the delegates and announces in a loud voice: "Message from the House of Lords!" Then, and not till then, are the representatives of the Lords admitted to the Chamber. It was as long ago as the first Charles that the then Speaker, named Lenthall, withstood the King himself, who broke in with his courtiers and demanded the whereabouts of certain members who had offended him, and to this demand Speaker Lenthall made the historic reply that he had neither ears to hear, eyes to see, nor mouth to speak anything but what the members of his House allowed him to hear, to see or to say.

The first thing the new House of Commons has to do is to elect its Speaker, and in this also ancient custom is rigidly adhered to. The outgoing Speaker, divested of his robes, sits as an ordinary member among his colleagues on one side or other of the House. The three clerks of the House, permanent officials, sit at the table. When the members are all assembled, the Chief Clerk rises to his feet. He is not a member, and therefore is not allowed to say a word. He raises his arm and points, his finger at the oldest member of the House. On the last occasion it was Mr. Thomas Burt, the member from Northumberland. This time it will be Mr. T. P. O'Connor, who, with thirty-eight years' continuous service, is the Father of the House. The member thus indicated stands up and proposes the new Speaker. After he has finished, the Chief Clerk again extends his finger; this time to the senior member of the other side of the House, who seconds the motion. The Speaker once elected takes the chair and is then in command of procedure. Usually the Speaker is a man chosen not for his strong party feelings but for his personal qualifications. Personality is the one thing that counts. He must be such a man who can be relied on to be as rigorously fair to political opponents as to friends—a man of courage, of determination, of wide and deep knowledge with regard to the rules of the House, and if he has a sense of humor, so much the better. He has no power at all in initiating legislation. He has the widest possible power in commanding the House, which places in his hands its privileges.

## *Age-Old Customs of the House of Commons Now Put to New Uses*



The chief clerk

The uniformed attendant announces in a loud voice: "Message from the House of Lords."

"Sergeant at arms, remove the honorable member."

### *Lowther in Action*

Mr. Speaker Lowther, who is now retiring, was one of the best if not the very best speaker of modern times. A Conservative in politics, his opinions were never reflected from his judgments in the chair. He had a commanding presence—a tall man, with a trim beard, a resonant voice, cold impartiality, strong when strength was required, but preferring to rule the Mother of Parliaments with wit rather than force. Remarkable deference was paid to him, as to all Speakers, by the most turbulent section, and if any member on any side of the House defied him Mr. Lowther was immediately supported by the whole House irrespective of party ties. I saw him defied only once. It was by a Socialist, Victor Grayson, who refused to cease a violent speech when requested to do so. The Speaker arose. "I name Mr. Victor Grayson." Instantly the Prime Minister arose to the table, as it is the duty of the leader of the House in such circumstances. "I beg to move that the honorable member be suspended from the service of the House." There was instant agreement from every member. Grayson proceeded speaking. "Sergeant at arms," thundered Speaker Lowther, "remove the honorable member!" With his hand on the hilt of his rapier the venerable sergeant at arms went up to Grayson and touched him on the shoulder. Then it was that Grayson gave in. With angry looks and angry words he left his seat and went out of the House. He was kept out for months as punishment.

Members of Congress find the procedure of the British House of Commons interesting by reason of its variations from their own assembly. For instance, it is out of order to read a newspaper in the chamber while the House is in session. Hats are generally worn while the members are seated, but whenever a man rises to speak he must take off his hat. The chamber is divided by an aisle which runs its entire length, some dozen feet wide, and the seats are banked up on each side. Those members, therefore, on the front benches are on the floor level. There is a strip of matting about three feet wide running along the entire front of each line, and on this matting the front bench members stand when they rise to address the House. It is out of order for a speaking member to put his feet in front of that matting. He must thus keep himself fairly close to his seat. The reason for this arises from the time when every gentleman of Parliament, civilian or not, wore a sword by his side. In the old days, in the excitement of debate, members facing each other might so far forget themselves as to attack each other. Restricted to the narrow strip in front of the seats, they were not able to reach their opponents with the point of the sword.

Whenever the House is in session the great electric light on top of the tower above the building gives indication of business going on. The instant the Speaker rises from the chair and adjourns the House he extinguishes the light by a tiny electric push button near his chair. This, again, is a relic of ancient times, when a lantern on a pole used to be put up on the top of the building to inform members who lived in lodgings on both sides of the River Thames that the House was sitting and that they should hurry to its deliberations. Another example from the centuries gone by is the loud stentorian cry of policeman and attendant, as soon as the Speaker rises from his chair, of "Who goes home?" The cry rings through the chamber from the corridors and the lobbies. It is taken up as a kind of chorus by all the servants of Parliament. In bygone days, when the streets of London after nightfall were beset by bravos, it was unsafe for a well-to-do individual to proceed on foot alone. Little parties of members, therefore, used to form themselves and proceed on their way together. Thus it was that "Who goes home?" was a call which was a matter of precaution and convenience.

### *The Memory of Guy Fawkes*

The Gunpowder Plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament has left its legacy not only in the celebration of Guy Fawkes Day on November 5, but also in the formal searching of the vaults of the Houses of Parliament on the day preceding the opening of any session. The chief of police, with a guard, formally, but systematically, goes through all the underground chambers connected with the Parliament buildings, and reports his discoveries, or the lack of them, to the Speaker.

The most remarkable inheritance, perhaps, in all the procedure of the British Parliament is one which comes down from the time when the Norman kings ruled over the country, which they had conquered, with its mixed population. The Norman French language was then established as the official medium. The King, of course, was punctilious in his use of it, and the most noteworthy example was when by his own tongue he gave assent to the legislation framed by Parliament. It is part of the British Constitution that the King should still give his formal assent to bills which have been carried. He does it to this day in the Norman French language. Local bills, grave political measures, or those concerned purely with administration, all receive the King's assent. Many a time have I in the House of Lords gallery heard that assent given. It is usually done by a commission representing the King. Dignified clerks of Parliament, in wig and gown, stand one on each side in the middle of the chamber and act on the instructions of the Lords Commissioners, who sit, by virtue of the King's command, exactly in front of the throne. As one clerk reads out the names of the bills, the other clerk pronounces the King's assent. "Le roy le veult" are the words he uses. They have been unvaried for nearly a thousand years.

### *Gentlemen Who Legislate*

Congressmen are always interested in the extraordinary decorum of the House of Commons. It is only on very rare occasions indeed that the Speaker has to ask for order. Let there be any occasion for him to interrupt a speaking member, or to soften down a scene of excitement, he merely rises from his seat. The fact that he stands up brings instant quiet through the whole House. His gentlest words of censure are taken very seriously. Not only the whole power of the government is at his back to give him authority, but also the sense of the House, the respect for law and order which is a positive religion with the Mother of Parliaments. The Speaker has no mallet or hammer; his position and his personality are his weapons. Very potent they are. Question time is the period most trying to Ministers and calls for all the alertness of the Speaker, because critical members pursuing the government may easily go beyond the bounds of recognized procedure. The Speaker has various means of dealing with small emergencies of this kind. There was a rapid fire of questions, I remember, on one occasion, and one or two ejaculations from ministerial supporters. The Speaker arose. "May I remind members," he said, "that this is question time, and not a conversazione."

On another occasion a member protested to the Speaker about the stoical silence of Mr. Asquith when peppered by supplementary questions. "Is it not in order, Mr. Speaker, for a member to ask a minister any question he likes?" "It is perfectly in order," replied the Speaker, gravely, "and it is equally in order for the minister to reply or not, as he thinks best." William Redmond, the gallant Irishman, who lost his life in France, fighting for the cause of the Allies, was an audacious questioner. He sought once to score off a recognized Liberal who, after receiving knighthood, had gone over to the Conservative side of the House on the last day of the session. He had even risen to ask a question on that day, but before the ministers could reply, William Redmond jumped up on what he called a point of order. "Is it in order, Mr. Speaker, for a member who has ratted after he has got knighthood to go over to the other side on the last day of the session?" The Speaker arose and replied with dignity, "It is never too late to mend."

The British Parliament is always a human drama well staged. It will probably be as interesting, and possibly as exciting, in the present session as any Parliament that has ever met.

# Will Labor Loosen Britannia's Rule of the Waves?

By P. N. Wilson

*American Correspondent of "The London Daily News"*

I HAVE returned from England and am not surprised to learn that Americans, and especially the more thoughtful captains of industry on this side of the Atlantic, are anxious to hear everything that can be told about the industrial crisis across the water. The facts are simple and they are serious. If I state them plainly, I must also make it clear that the good sense of Britain will pull her through.

In opening Parliament, King George indicated that victory over German despotism was complete. M. Clemenceau used somewhat different language, but in any event our workers are not yet conscious that victory means for them the millennium. For reasons which they do not understand, peace is delayed. It is true that general conscription will be avoided, but an army of 900,000 men must occupy German territory, and as Sir Arthur Yapp, of our British Y. M. C. A., has observed, the German people in those regions are showing an effusive hospitality, calculated to provoke comparisons with France and Belgium, and to suggest that the Teuton is not so bad a fellow, after all. Bolshevism is hardly an epidemic in Western Europe, but the germs are in the air, and as unrest becomes more acute in Germany, so does the danger of infection spread toward the ocean. France is steadied by her agriculture and by the good fortune of Paris, crowded deservedly by statesmen and diplomatists and innumerable visitors. But with her Prime Minister absent for most of his time and industries concentrated in cities and coalfields, Britain faces the full breeze of restless discontent. And the general election, by splitting labor and shattering liberalism, has weakened, as it were, the cushions between the executive and the wage earners. Although for the first time, labor, as a party, sits on the front opposition bench, yet the trade unionists do not think that this Parliament, with its permanent House of Lords and its hundreds of Conservatives, speaks for them. In the constituencies, they are swamped by women voters who often represent the consumers rather than the producers of commodities. Also, the workers have lost their Irish allies.

From all of this it follows that a solution of the crisis is sought outside the walls of the legislatures, in what is nothing less than a national convention of capital and labor, meeting under the personal presidency of Mr. Lloyd George, in the central hall of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Seldom in our history has there been a more dramatic contrast than that between these proceedings to avert a general strike on March 15 and the brilliant wedding in Westminster Abbey hard by, by which Princess Patricia of Connaught, granddaughter of Queen Victoria, was united with a naval officer and commoner, Captain Ramsay. There you see the sweep of democracy along the whole line, involving all grades of society, from the docker to the King's household.

Sceptical of politicians, the workers had drifted toward direct action. In Belfast the bitter feud between Catholic and Protestant was merged in what for the moment was nothing less than revolution, the entire city being held up at the will of the strikers and normal conditions restored only when Lord Pirie was summoned. In Glasgow the crowds were charged, military occupied strategic points and tanks were hurried on to the scene. But it was in London that the strangest things happened. British statesmen have always recognized the vital importance of retaining in the capital a police force, controlled not by the municipality but by the Home Office or government, recruited as far as possible from the villages, and therefore innocent of trade unionism. For years the police have been refused the right of combination, but since the armistice was signed they have won it. They forced their wishes by direct pressure on Downing Street. It is admitted, I think, that their officials were lacking in appreciation of these men's difficulties under rising prices for the essentials of life. But the strike revealed to labor none the less how great was its power even against the state itself.

Yet every one in England has realized that such disputes, ostensibly between labor and capital but actually between the producer and the consumer, have been mere skirmishes compared with the fundamental struggle rapidly developing over coal. Among our workers the man in a mine has long been an aristocrat. His trade unions are the most venerable. Their vote swings most labor congresses. The miners were the first to send members into the House of Commons and a minister into Mr. Gladstone's final government. The miner has obtained an eight-hour day, frequent increases of remuneration and stricter vigilance against accident. He has a keen patriotism. The only difficulty with the miner was that he was determined to enlist against the Germans, whatever happened to the nation's coal supply.

The miner does not act hastily. He is deliberate and he is formidable. He has tabled his latest terms, and I must state quite unequivocally that, unless they have been sadly misinterpreted, they constitute a tremendous ultimatum to British trade, and particularly to her exports abroad. Hours are to be shorter and wages are to be increased above their present high level by 30 per cent. I must not be understood to give final figures as to what this will cost per ton of coal. That matter is to be examined by a commission over which Mr. Justice Sankey will preside. But the statement is that coal at the pithead will be put up from 18 shillings to 26 shillings a ton—that is, by 8 shillings a ton—and that household coal, which before the war was available for 25 shillings, will rise to 60 shillings.

Now coal is the lifeblood of British prosperity. It is because we have had cheap fuel near our metal fields that we have built up our engineering and shipbuilding trades and established our international credit. Many of the miners think doubtless that, under nationalization or state ownership, there would be saved enough out of costs of distribution and royalties to meet the bill for higher wages. Mr. Lloyd George does not believe this. Royalties and profits do not exceed one shilling and sixpence—or less than one-fifth of the proposed increases. If all royalties and profits were wiped out the problem would not be solved. It would remain virtually as grave as before.

This is not a fight between employer and employed. The mines are already worked under the government, and apart from that circumstance any additional cost of coal can be passed on at once to the purchaser or the community. Therefore we have, fairly and squarely, an issue between a vast body of workers, democratic workers, fully acquainted with what they are doing, and the nation. Is the control of an essential necessity an elemental product—to entitle those who produce it to privileges over all other classes, to the main much less fortunate? Is the grip of the landlord over the soil and its riches to disappear, only to be followed by a much more costly grip of the industry which works the soil? The urgency of this situation is the plainer when I add that the railwaymen and dockers will act with the miners. This is the now famous triple alliance in British labor.

One thing must be evident to these millions of workers. They may compel Britain to pay their price. They cannot compel the world to pay Britain's price. If our tonnage on the high seas is too expensive other tonnage will take its place. If our exported coal can only be had at a prohibitive figure, competition will be rapid and effective. If our cotton goods in China, the Near East and India go up higher than Japanese goods, Lancashire will soon know it. Ultimately the miners will know it. For these reasons, I am assured that matters will not be pressed to disastrous lengths. Denunciations of profiteering will not lead sensible men into indefensible defiance. There will be anxiety—perhaps prolonged anxiety. Labor will learn, perhaps reluctantly, that demands cannot be met merely because they are made. But the upshot of it all will be a more equitable adjustment of human relations and a wider extension of human happiness.

# The Pleasure Car of the Air—1919 Model

By Theodore M. Knappen

SOON the man who now esteems it as his bounden duty to keep up with the annual procession of new models of automobiles, exercising scrupulousness lest he be seen in any calendar year with a car of the last or any preceding year, will be able to transfer his migratory affections to airplanes. Now that we have with us the airplane as a recognized vehicle of civil transit and transport, though its place is still of questionable extent and of ill defined boundaries, it may be expected that it will evolve about as rapidly in its new environment as it did in the military one during the war.

The manufacturers are feeling their way, they are too cautious to build for stock, and so they are trying to detect the direction of the aeronautical affairs wind by putting out samples that will venture into the aeronautical unknown and return with some tidings. When Uncle Sam comes through with his peace-time programme for the army and navy, and the Postoffice, Forestry Bureau, Department of Interior and other administrative agencies begin to spend a little regular money with the manufacturers, so that they can see something coming in, they will begin to put out a lot. And when they do there will soon be in this wide land such a variety of airplanes as well as airships that some of them will surely hit it right. There is probably no such field ahead of the aircraft manufacturers as there was ahead of the automobile makers in the first decade of this century, but there is going to be a big business for some of the makers—just as soon as the lines of use and adaptability are a little more clearly defined.

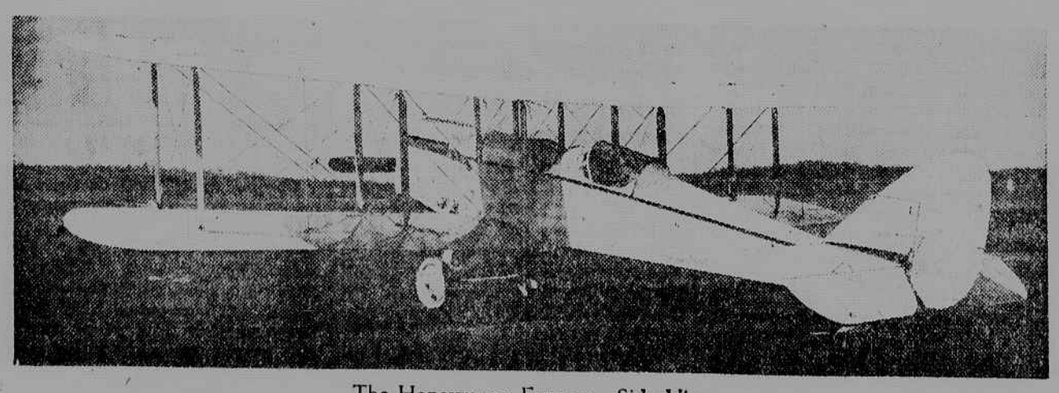
To look at all the different models that may be seen at the aircraft show these two weeks one might think that the industry was already firmly intrenched. It is no more firmly intrenched, in fact, than the manufacture of artillery has been since the armistice. The exhibit is largely the legacy of the mighty activity of the war and for the war an activity that put between 200,000 and 300,000 people into making airplanes, 120,000 to using them or contributing to their use, that spent nearly a billion dollars and in the end poured out the fighting ships of the air and their equipment and accoutrements in such a volume that storage is now a problem. The men, the engineers and the capital are ready, but the demand is timid, desultory and scattered. However, it's coming—soon or late—and if Congress comes through by March 4 with some fair-sized appropriations there will be great things doing this next year.

But just to take a look at some of the scouting models that have been evolved to spy out the future is worth while. Among the aircraft corporations that hope to hold on and find firm ground ere long is the Dayton Wright Aircraft Corporation, and it is showing some machines that illustrate its ideas of possibilities.

The Messenger is something in the flivver line, a kind of two-seated buggy of the air. It has no particular speed, it can't climb like a rocket and its engine is not exactly as neat as the works of a watch, but it has ruggedness, endurance and reliability. If it can't travel at more than eighty miles an hour it has the advantage of being able to land at forty. It is pretty near fool-proof and as tough as a goat. Its cost is within the reach of the average automobile buyer and it needs only four gallons of gas an hour. The first type of the Messenger was intended for military travelling uses, but it has been somewhat altered for peace uses. A feature of this airboat is that its engine is air-cooled, which results in the elimination of much weight, and has thus made possible a small plane with a large factor of safety. A "ship" of this kind would be very handy for the business man who wants to live fifty or a hundred miles out of town and on no particular railway line and wants to come and go quickly and at will.

A little later he may graduate to the "Honeymoon Special" or the Limousine. The "Honeymoon Special," a picture of which is shown herewith, has room for two passengers in the rear cockpit. The passenger possibilities of the Limousine are as yet not dennitely determined, but possibly as many as six persons besides the pilot may find it comfortable.

By way of contrast with these models of the new time is shown the famous Canary De Haviland 4, that was the first plane to rise from earth under the impulse of a Liberty motor. It is the first De Haviland built by the Dayton Wright company, and has been used as a "try-out" ship throughout the war. Whatever alteration, improvement or attachment was planned was first tried on the Canary. Since it took its initial ascent on October 29, 1917, it has been aloft for a total of a thousand hours and has travelled 111,000 miles, including twenty-eight trips of more than a hundred miles, among them trips from Dayton, Ohio, to New York and Philadelphia and from Dayton to Washington and return. A coat of military gray has replaced the yellow that gave it its name, but otherwise it is about the same as when first turned out and is, armament and all, just like the 2,000 machines of this type that were sent to France during the war by the Dayton Wright Company.



The Honeymoon Express—Side View.